

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 BANGKOK 5108

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, LA, TH
SUBJ: RESISTANCE ACTIVITY IN LAOS - THE VIEW FROM UDORN

REF: A) UDORN 7) B) UDORN 35 C) UDORN 45) VIENTIANE 395
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SUMMARY: ACCORDING TO INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO CONSULATE
UDORN FROM LAO REFUGEES AND LOCAL THAI OFFICIALS IN NORTH-
EASTERN THAILAND, CONFLICT IN LAOS BETWEEN RESISTANCE ELEMENTS
AND LPLA FORCES, SOMETIMES ASSISTED BY PAVN TROOPS, WOULD
APPEAR TO BE WIDESPREAD. THIS MESSAGE DESCRIBES THE LOCATION
OF MAIN RESISTANCE FORCES, ARMS AND SUPPLIES, LEADERSHIP AND
ORGANIZATION, POPULAR SUPPORT, LPDR MILITARY RESPONSE, PAVN
INVOLVEMENT, RTG CONTACTS WITH RESISTANCE, AND ROLE OF REFUGEE
CAMPS. CONSUL UDORN CONCLUDES THAT, FROM ITS VANTAGEPOINT,
WHILE RESISTANCE STRUGGLE MAY REPRESENT A CONSIDERABLE INTERNAL
PROBLEM FOR LPDR, BASIC WEAKNESS OF RESISTANCE EFFORT, ESPECIAL-
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LY ITS LACK OF POLITICAL CREDIBILITY, WOULD SEEM IN
FINAL ANALYSIS TO PREVENT IT FROM BECOMING A SERIOUS
THREAT TO COMMUNIST CONTROL OF COUNTRY. END SUMMARY.

1. INTRODUCTION. AFTER CONDUCTING A LARGE NUMBER OF
INTERVIEWS WITH LAO REFUGEES AND THAI OFFICIALS IN THE NORTH-
EAST RECENTLY, CONSUL UDORN HAS DRAWN TOGETHER ADMITTEDLY
FRAGMENTARY COMMENTS INTO A REPORT ON RESISTANCE IN LAOS
AS HE AND HIS STAFF SEE IT FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF THE UDORN
CONSULAR DISTRICT. AS WOULD BE EXPECTED, IT TOUCHES ONLY

ON ACTIVITY IN THOSE PARTS OF LAOS BORDERING THE DISTRICT OR OF WHICH REFUGEES HAVE INFORMATION. AT BEST THE INFORMATION MUST BE REGARDED AS TENTATIVE AND LARGELY UNCONFIRMED. HOWEVER, IT PROVIDES ONE CAREFULLY COMPILED VIEW WHICH EMBASSY BELIEVES DEFINITELY TO MERIT BEING ADDED TO OTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO ADDRESSEES ON THE SUBJECT. NEEDLESS TO SAY, THERE IS NO INTENTION OF TRYING TO PROVIDE A COMPLETE OR DEFINITIVE DESCRIPTION OF LAO RESISTANCE, WHICH IS NOT RPT NOT WITHIN PURVIEW OF CONSULATE UDORN. IN VIEW OF LARGE NUMBER OF PRESS REPORTS WHICH HAVE RECENTLY ORIGINATED IN THAILAND ON THE SUBJECT, UDORN'S REPORT HELPS TO PLACE THESE IN PERSPECTIVE. CONSUL UDORN'S ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT RESISTANCE SITUATION IN LAOS FOLLOWS:

2. LOCATION, COMPOSITION AND EXTENT OF RESISTANCE ACTIVITY.

A. RESISTANCE ELEMENTS APPEAR TO CONSIST OF TWO PRINCIPAL FORCES: MEO TRIBESMEN AND LOWLAND LAO, PRIMARILY EX-MILITARY FROM RANKS OF FAR. A NUMBER OF REFUGEES HAVE DESCRIBED MEO, WITH AN ESTIMATED SEVERAL THOUSAND FULL-TIME COMBATANTS, AS OPERATING PRIMARILY IN LARGE AREA THAT EXTENDS FROM NORTHEAST VIENTIANE PROVINCE ACROSS SOUTHERN HALF OF XIENG KHOUANG PROVINCE AND CURVES SOUTHWARD TO INCLUDE EASTERN THIRD OF FORMER BORIKHANE PROVINCE AND NORTHERN THIRD OF KHAMMOUANE PROVINCE. MEO RESISTANCE
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ELEMENTS ARE ALSO ACTIVE IN MOUNTAINOUS AREAS NORTH AND NORTHWEST OF PAKSANE AND IN SAYABOURY PROVINCE. LOWLAND LAO RESISTANCE FORCES SEEM TO BE ACTIVE PRINCIPALLY IN SAYABOURY PROVINCE, VIENTIANE PLAINS, AND AREAS AROUND PAKSANE, SAVANNAKHET, AND PAKSE. BASED ON VARIETY OF SOURCES, WE ESTIMATE FULL-TIME ARMED STRENGTH OF LOWLAND LAO FORCES TO NUMBER 500-1,000. WHEN ADDED TO NUMBER OF MEO REGULAR COMBATANTS, RESISTANCE COMBAT FORCES CURRENTLY APPEAR TO TOTAL APPROXIMATELY 3,000-5,000.

B. (STRENGTH FIGURES PROVIDED IN REF D DO NOT DISTINGUISH BETWEEN ARMED AND UNARMED RESISTANCE. IF THEY REFER TO FORMER, THEY WOULD APPEAR TO BE GREATLY EXAGGERATED, ACCORDING TO REFUGEES.)

C. THEY DESCRIBE RESISTANCE MILITARY ACTIVITY AS PRIMARILY OF A GUERRILLA NATURE. IT APPEARS LARGELY CONFINED TO PLATOON OR SQUAD-SIZE ASSAULTS AIMED AT DISCOURAGING LPLA TROOPS/OFFICIALS FROM ENTERING RESISTANCE-INFLUENCED AREAS AND/OR HARASSING LPLA SUPPLY LINES. HOWEVER, WE HAVE ALSO RECEIVED REPORTS OF OCCASIONAL COMPANY-SIZE RESISTANCE ELEMENTS ATTACKING LPLA POSITIONS IN MEO-DOMINATED AREAS AND IN SAYABOURY PROVINCE. A MAJOR FOCUS OF RESISTANCE INTERDICTION EFFORTS IS ROUTE 13. TRAVEL OVER THIS ROAD FROM LUANG

PRABANG TO VIENTIANE, AND SOUTH TO PAKSE, IS REPORTEDLY
HAZARDOUS FOR LPLA TROOPS AND OFFICIALS.

D. ALTHOUGH BULK OF RESISTANCE FORCES APPEARS TO OPERATE
PRINCIPALLY IN RURAL AREAS THERE ARE SEVERAL INSTANCES WHEN
LOWLAND LAO ELEMENTS REPORTEDLY INITIATED CLASHES WITH LPLA
FORCES ON OUTSKIRTS OF TOWN SUCH AS SAVANNAKHET AND PAKSANE,
ACCORDING TO REFUGEES, AND THE SAYABOURY PROVINCIAL CAPITAL,
ACCORDING TO THAI SECURITY OFFICIALS. RECENT ACCOUNTS IN
BANGKOK PRESS (REF C) HAVE HIGHLIGHTED REPORTS OF CONTINU-
ING CONTACTS BETWEEN RESISTANCE AND LPLA NEAR VIENTIANE
AND PAKSE. REFUGEES HAVE CONFIRMED THAT SOME FIGHTING IS
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TAKING PLACE, BUT ACTUAL EXTENT OF CLASHES HAS BEEN DIF-
FICULT TO DETERMINE THUS FAR. SEVERAL SOURCES HAVE TOLD
US INDEPENDENTLY, IN CONNECTION WITH FIGHTING AROUND
PAKSANE, THAT RESISTANCE UNITS HAVE RECENTLY SUCCESSFULLY
BLOWN UP TWO BRIDGES ON ROUTE 13 NORTH OF TOWN.

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E. IN GENERAL, RESISTANCE UNITS HAVE BENEFITED FROM THEIR
DISPERSED LOCATIONS, SHREWD EMPLOYMENT OF GUERRILLA TACTICS,
AND TACIT SYMPATHY OF LOCAL POPULATIONS. THEY ARE ALSO
INHERITORS OF A LONG TRADITION IN SOUTHERN PANHANDLE,
AND AMONG MOUNTAINOUS TRIBESMEN, OF RESISTING CENTRAL
AUTHORITY FROM VIENTIANE.

3. RESISTANCE ARMS AND SUPPLIES - RESISTANCE MILITARY
CAPABILITY APPEARS TO BE SEVERELY LIMITED BY SCARCITY OF

WEAPONS, AMMUNITION, COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT, AND MEDICAL AND FOOD SUPPLIES. BOTH REFUGEES AND THAI OFFICIALS HAVE STATED THAT SOME REPT SOME RESISTANCE UNITS HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN CAPTURING A FEW ARMS AND SUPPLIES FROM LPLA BUT IN AN AMOUNT ENTIRELY INADEQUATE TO MEET BASIC NEEDS. THEY ADD THAT DESPITE CONTINUING EFFORTS, RESISTANCE LEADERS HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO DATE TO DEVELOP A RELIABLE OUTSIDE SUPPLY SOURCE TO SUPPORT THEIR MILITARY OPERATIONS. SOME OBSERVERS OF RESISTANCE STRUGGLE EXPRESS ERIOUS DOUBTS
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ABOUT ABILITY OF RESISTANCE GROUPS TO CONTINUE TO OPPOSE THE LPLA MUCH LONGER UNLESS THEY RESOLVE THEIR SUPPLY PROBLEMS. OTHERS BELIEVE THAT RESISTANCE UNITS CAN FIGHT LPLA INDEFINITELY BY CUTTING BACK ON THEIR OPERATIONS UNTIL THEIR SUPPLY SITUATION IMPROVES.

4. RESISTANCE LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION - EVEN MORE INHIGITING TO RESISTANCE CAUSE THAN LACK OF SUFFICIENT MILITARY SUPPLIES IS ABSENCE OF EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP. REFUGEES WITH WHOM WE HAVE BEEN INCONTACT REPORT THAT NO SINGLE LEADER OR ANY REAL STATURE, EITHER FROM MEO OR LOWLAND LAO, HAS EMERGED THUS FAR TO TAKE CHARGE OF VARIOUS RESISTANCE UNITS DRAWN FROM EITHER OF TWO MAIN GROUPS, MUCH LESS PROVIDE LEADERSHIP TO RESISTANCE STRUGGLE AS A WHOLE (ACCORDING TO OUR SOURCES, REPORTED RESISTANCE LEADERS CITED IN REFTEL D, PARA 1 AND 2, DEPARTED THAILAND AS REFUGEES TO THIRD COUNTRIES AND ARE NOT DIRECTLY ASSOCIATED WITH CURRENT RESITANCE EFFORTS).

A. AMONG MEO THERE APPEARS TO BE THREE OR FOUR RESISTANCE ELEMENTS, WHILE LOWLAND LAO RESISTANCE UNITS NUMBER AT LEAST SEVEN OR EIGHT. THESE FORCES ARE GENERALLY COMMANDED BY FORMER MILITARY OFFICERS RANGING FROM RANK OF CAPTAIN TO COLONEL. WHILE SOME UNITS ARE IN CONTACT WITH ONE ANOTHER, THEY USUALLY OPERATE INDEPENDENTLY. ALSO, THEY APPEAR TO COMPETE WITH EACH OTHER FOR OUTSIDE SOURCES OF SUPPLY. THERE IS SOME INDICATION OF POSSIBLE COORDINATION BETWEEN MEO AND LOWLAND LAO RESISTANCE UNITS IN PAKSANE AREA BUT, IN GENERAL, EFFECTIVE CONTACT BETWEEN TWO MAIN GROUPS SEEMS VERY LIMITED.

5. POPULAR SUPPORT FOR RESISTANCE - RECENTLY ARRIVED REFUGEES REPORT THAT SYMPATHY FOR RESISTANCE AMONG LOWLAND LAO POPULATION IN SAYABOURY PROVINCE AND IN AREAS SURROUNDING MEKONG RIVER VALEY TOWNS IS WIDESPREAD. FORMER LAO OFFICIALS NOW IN THAILAND CLAIM THIS SUPORT IS BASED ON
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GERNERAL PUBLIC DISILLUSIONMENT WITH COMMUNIST REGIME THAT

HAS NOTICEABLY INCREASED IN RECENT MONTHS DUE TO LPDR POLICIES IMPOSING AGRICULTURAL TAXES AND REQUIRING FAMILIES OF INDIVIDUALS UNDER DETENTION AT VIENG SAY TO JOIN THEM THERE.

A. ACTUAL STRENGTH OF POPULAR BACKING FOR LOWLAND LAO RESISTANCE, HOWEVER, REMAINS UNCLEAR. EVIDENCE SUGGESTS THAT WHILE THERE MAY BE GROWING COVERT SYMPATHY FOR RESISTANCE AMONG GENERAL POPULATION, PUBLIC IS NOT PREPARED TO SUPPORT STRUGGLE ON A LARGE SCALE. THIS ATTITUDE APPEARS IN PART TO BE RESULT OF MEDIOCRE CALIBER OF LEADERS OF VARIOUS LOWLAND RESISTANCE GROUPS, MOST OF WHOM WERE ASSOCIATED WITH DISCREDITED, PREVIOUS RIGHTWING REGIMES.

B. WE HAVE NO RELIABLE INFORMATION REGARDING LOWLAND LAO SENTIMENT CONCERNING MEO RESISTANCE EFFORTS BUT WE WOULD HAZARD A GUESS THAT POPULAR IDENTIFICATION WITH MEO IS NOT GREAT. OUR SOURCES INDICATE THAT AMONG MEO TRIBESMEN THEMSELVES ATTITUDES TOWARDS RESISTANCE DIFFER, WITH A HARD CORE MINORITY LEADING EFFORTS TO OPPOSE IMPOSITION OF LPDR AUTHORITY, SUPPORTED BY PERHAPS MAJORITY OF REMAINDER BUT WITH VARYING DEGREES OF ENTHUSIASM.

6. LPDR MILITARY RESPONSE TO RESISTANCE. ACCORDING TO FOUR LAO PILOTS WHO FLED TO THAILAND IN EARLY 1977, THE LPDR BEGAN LARGE-SCALE (BATTALION-SIZE) MILITARY OPERATIONS AGAINST MEO RESISTANCE ELEMENTS IN AREAS DESCRIBED IN PARA 2A IN JUNE, 1976. THIS CAMPAIGN HAS CONTINUED INTERMITTENTLY TO PRESENT. THAI SECURITY OFFICIALS IN LOEI PROVINCE CLAIMED THAT LPLA TROOPS ALSO MOUNTED OPERATIONS AGAINST LOWLAND LAO RESISTANCE UNITS IN SAYABOURY PROVINCE IN APPROXIMATELY OCTOBER. SEVERAL RECENT REFUGEES ADD THAT THE LPLA MAY HAVE INITIATED AT ABOUT THE SAME TIME SMALL (COMPANY-SIZE) CLEARING OPERATIONS AGAINST RESISTANCE ELEMENTS IN THE SAVANNAKHET AND PAKSE AREAS.

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A. WE HAVE NO RELIABLE ESTIMATE OF THE NUMBER OF LPLA SOLDIERS COMMITTED TO ANTI-RESISTANCE OPERATIONS. HOWEVER, IF REPORTS OF QUANTITY OF RICE DROPS TO SUPPORT LPLA UNITS AND PAVN ALLIES OPERATING AGAINST MEO ARE ACCURATE (SEE PARA 6 OF REF B), NUMBER OF TROOPS DEPLOYED FOR THIS PURPOSE WOULD APPEAR TO BE CONSIDERABLE. BASED UPON THE ACCOUNTS OF THE PILOTS, COMBATTING RESISTANCE ELEMENTS IN DISPERSED LOCATIONS RANGING FROM SAYABOURY IN THE WEST TO PAKSE IN THE SOUTH AND XIENG KHOUANG IN THE NORTH, HAS APPARENTLY PLACED A DEFINITE STRAIN ON LPDR MILITARY AND LOGISTIC CAPABILITIES. FINDING THEMSELVES IN WHAT AMOUNTS TO A SMALL INTERNAL WAR, LPDR LEADERS HAVE ENLISTED SUPPORT OF THEIR VIETNAMESE COMRADES. EVEN WITH ASSISTANCE OF PAVN TROOPS AND ADVANTAGE OF GREATLY SUPERIOR MANPOWER AND FIREPOWER OVER RESISTANCE UNITS, LPLA TROOPS ARE RE-

PORTEDLY HAVING A DIFFICULT TIME IN DEALING WITH
RESISTANCE. POOR LOGISTIC BACKUP AND LACK OF AGGRESSIVENESS
OF PL SOLDIERS APPEAR TO BE MAJOR PROBLEMS PLAGUING LPDR
ANTI-RESISTANCE CAMPAIGN.

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7. INVOLVEMENT OF VIETNAMESE TROOPS. TWO OF THE PILOTS
(SEE PARA 3, REF B) STATED THAT VIETNAMESE TROOPS ARE
ASSISTING THE LPLA UNITS IN OPERATIONS AGAINST MEO RESIS-
TANCE IN MUANG MOC (UF 9591), MUANG MO (UG 8807), AND BAN
DON (VH 4682). THEY ALSO REPORTED THAT PAVN TROOPS ARE
PROVIDING MUSCLE BEHIND LPLA EFFORTS TO SECURE ROUTE 9/13
EAST FROM SAVANNAKHET TO SENO AGAINST LOWLAND LAO RESIS-
TANCE. THAI SECURITY OFFICIALS ADVISE THAT SMALL VIETNAMESE
MILITARY ADVISORY TEMAS HAVE ALSO WORKED WITH LPLA TROOPS
IN COMBATTING LOWLAND LAO RESISTANCE ACTIVITIES IN SAYA-
BOURY PROVINCE. WE HAVE UNCONFIRMED REPORT THAT, IN AD-
DITION TO PAVN TROOPS, LPLA ARE USING LEO TEUNG SOLDIERS
IN OPERATIONS AGAINST PRIMARILY MEO RESISTANCE.

8. RTG CONTACT WITH RESISTANCE. DURING OUR ROUTINE VISITS
AROUND CONSULAR DISTRICT, WE HAVE CONCLUDED THAT RTG IN-
VOLVEMENT FROM NORTHEAST WITH RESISTANCE IN LAOS TAKES
VARIOUS FORMS. THAI OFFICIALS HAVE CONFIDED THAT, IN UBON
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PROVINCE, BPP UNITS, REPORTEDLY ON INSTRUCTION FROM HIGHER
AUTHORITIES, PERMIT FOUR SMALL LOWLAND LAO RESISTANCE
GROUPS TO OCCUPY REMOTE AREAS JUST INSIDE EASTERN BORDER OF
PROVINCE FROM WHICH THEY CONDUCT OCCASIONAL FORAYS INTO

LAOS, PRIMARILY DIRECTED AT PL INSTALLATIONS IN PAKSE REGION. MROU HEADQUARTERS IN NAKHON PHANOM, APPARENTLY AT DIRECTION OR IN COLLABORATION WITH NORTHEAST ISOC COMMAND, APPEAR TO PROVIDE LIMITED SUPPORT TO LOWLAND LAO RESISTANCE ELEMENTS IN SAVANNAKHET AREA. CONSULATE EMPLOYEE WAS TOLD THAT G-2 OF 2ND RTA FORWARD IN SAKHON NAKHON MAINTAINS INTELLIGENCE LIAISON WITH LOWLAND LAO RESISTANCE FORCES IN PAKSANE AND VIENTIANE PLANS AREA. RTG INTELLIGENCE SERVICE IN UDORN PROVINCE ARE IN CONTACT WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF VARIOUS MEO AND LOWLAND LAO RESISTANCE ELEMENTS.

A. WE DO NOT KNOW TO WHAT EXTENT THESE VARIOUS RTG AGENCIES HAVE BECOME INVOLVED WITH RESISTANCE BECAUSE OF THEIR OWN INITIATIVE OR BECAUSE OF ORDERS FROM BANGKOK. HOWEVER, TO BEST OF OUR KNOWLEDGE, OFFICIALLY SANCTIONED RTG ASSISTANCE TO RESISTANCE FORCES SEEMS TO BE QUITE LIMITED THUS FAR, DESPITE REPEATED ENTREATIES OF RESISTANCE REPRESENTATIVES FOR SUBSTANTIAL HELP. ASSISTANCE APPEARS TO CONSIST PRIMARILY OF MONEY AND SMALL CONTRIBUTIONS OF INDIVIDUAL WEAPONS AND AMMUNITION PROVIDED IN RETURN FOR INTELLIGENCE INFORMATION. THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT RTG REPRESENTATIVES MAY HAVE COLLABORATED WITH RESISTANCE UNITS IN SELECTED, SMALL SABOTAGE OPERATIONS BUT THIS IS UNCONFIRMED.

B. IN ADDITION TO OFFICIAL SOURCES OF AID RESISTANCE REPRESENTATIVES HAVE ALSO RECEIVED HELP FROM PRIVATE, MILITANT RIGHT-WING ORGANIZATIONS SUCH AS NAWAPHON. IN UDORN, NAWAPHON OFFICIALS HAVE DONATED SMALL AMOUNTS OF MONEY TO RESISTANCE CAUSE AND HAVE INTERCEDED WITH POLICE AUTHORITIES TO ENABLE RESISTANCE REPRESENTATIVES TO TRAVEL

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OUTSIDE OF NONG KHAI CAMP. WE HAVE ALSO BEEN INFORMED THAT NORTHEAST THAI LUMBERING AND CONSTRUCTION INTERESTS HAVE HIRED RESISTANCE UNITS TO RECOVER LOGS AND HEAVY EARTHMOVING EQUIPMENT FROM SAYABOURY PROVINCE AND PAKSANE RESPECTIVELY.

9. REFUGEE CAMPS AND RESISTANCE. DURING OUR PERIODIC STOPS AT REFUGEE CAMPS AND IN THE COURSE OF FREQUENT CONTACT WITH UNHCR REPRESENTATIVES, IT HAS BEEN APPARENT THAT A FURTHER IMPORTANT TYPE OF SUPPORT AVAILABLE IN NORTHEAST TO RESISTANCE IS REFUGE PROVIDED BY THREE REFUGEE CAMPS LOCATED IN BORDER PROVINCES OF LOEI, NONG KHAI, AND UBON. RESISTANCE REPRESENTATIVES APPEAR TO BE QUITE ACTIVE IN LATTER TWO CAMPS WHICH HAVE TOTAL OF NEARLY 20,000 INHABITANTS. THESE REPRESENTATIVES MAINTAIN CONTINUAL CONTACT WITH THEIR RESPECTIVE GROUPS IN LAOS, DRAFT LENGTHY PETITIONS TO THAI AUTHORITIES FOR ASSISTANCE, USUALLY ACCOMPANIED BY REAMS OF INTELLIGENCE INFORMATION, AND CONDUCT

RECRUITING ACTIVITIES, APPARENTLY WITH ONLY MEAGER SUCCESS. THAI CAMP OFFICIALS APPEAR TO PERMIT SELECTED RESISTANCE FIGURES TO MOVE IN AND OUT OF CAMPS WITHOUT TOO MUCH DIFFICULTY. HOWEVER, IT IS OUR IMPRESSION THAT OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF REFUGEES IN TWO CAMPS, WHILE GENERALLY AWARE OF PRESENCE OF RESISTANCE MATTERS AND AVOID BECOMING INVOLVED.

A. IN LOEI CAMP, WHICH HOUSES 12,000 MEO TRIBESMEN, RESISTANCE ACTIVITY APPEARS MINIMAL ALTHOUGH COMMUNICATION WITH MEO RESISTANCE ELEMENTS IN LAOS IS MAINTAINED. MEO CAMP LEADERSHIP, WHICH INCLUDED MANY FORMER KEY AIDES TO EX-GENERAL VANG PAO, HAS REPEATEDLY INFORMED US THAT THEY CONCLUDED LONG AGO FURTHER RESISTANCE TO LPLA AND PAVN ALLIES, WITHOUT STRONG OUTSIDE SUPPORT, IS FUTILE. UNHCR REP AND U.S. MISSIONARIES WHO VISIT CAMP FREQUENTLY REPORT OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF CAMP'S INHABITANTS ENDORSE THEIR LEADERSHIP'S VIEW.
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10. FUTURE OF RESISTANCE. OUR GENERAL IMPRESSION, BASED ON CONVERSATIONS WITH REFUGEES AND LOCAL OFFICIALS, IS THAT WHILE RESISTANCE STRUGGLE IS CURRENTLY CAUSING LPDR AUTHORITIES CONSIDERABLE DIFFICULTIES, ITS FUTURE PROSPECTS APPEAR DIM. RESISTANCE EFFORT REMAINS BASICALLY UNORGANIZED AND LACKING IN RESPONSIBLE, FIRST-RATE LEADERSHIP. IT SHOWN NO SIGNS OF DEVELOPING AN EFFECTIVE POLITICAL ALTERNATIVE TO POLICIES OF LAO PEOPLES PARTY (LPP) THAT WOULD APPEAL TO LARGE SEGMENTS OF POPULATION WHO APPEAR TO BE GENUINELY DISSATISFIED WITH COMMUNIST REGIME. RESISTANCE REPRESENTATIVES ARGUE THAT IF ONLY THEY COULD OBTAIN RELIABLE OUTSIDE SOURCES OF MILITARY SUPPLIES THEY COULD DEFEAT LPLA. HOWEVER, IT APPEARS TO US THAT EVEN IN UNLIKELY EVENT THAT SUCH SUPPLIES COULD BE OBTAINED, THEY WOULD NOT BE SUFFICIENT TO COMPENSATE FOR OTHER FUNDAMENTAL WEAKNESSES OF RESISTANCE STRUGGLE, PARTICULARLY ITS LACK OF POLITICAL CREDIBILITY.

A. WHILE WE WOULD EXPECT RESISTANCE EFFORTS IN LAOS TO CONTINUE FOR SOME TIME IN FUTURE WE DO NOT THINK RESISTANCE STRUGGLE POSSESSES SUFFICIENT STRENGTH TO SERIOUSLY CHALLENGE COMMUNIST AUTHORITIES FOR CONTROL OF COUNTRY. EVENTUALLY, SUPERIOR POLITICAL SKILLS, ORGANIZATION, MANPOWER AND FIREPOWER OF LPLA AND PAVN ALLIES SHOULD PROVE DECISIVE IN DEALING WITH RESISTANCE PROBLEM.

B. WE WOULD ALSO NOTE THAT, IN ADDITION TO BEING AN INTERNAL SECURITY PROBLEM FOR LPDR, RESISTANCE ACTIVITIES WILL ALSO CONTINUE TO BE AN IRRITANT IN THAI/LAO RELATIONS. ON ONE HAND, THAI SENIOR MILITARY AND SECURITY OFFICIALS IN NORTHEAST, IN VIEW OF WHAT THEY PERCEIVE AS LPDR'S SYSTEMATIC AND COMPREHENSIVE SUPPORT OF THAI COMMUNIST

INSURGENTS, APPARENTLY FEEL JUSTIFIED IN EXTENDING LIMITED
HELP TO RESISTANCE ELEMENTS WHO THEY HOPE WILL DISTRACT LPDR
PM KAYSONE PHOUMIVAN AND HIS VIETNAMESE ADVISORS FROM
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ALLEGED DESIGNS ON NORTHEAST. ON OTHER HAND, LPDR LEADERS
SEE IN THAI CONTACT WITH RESISTANCE CONFIRMATION OF THEIR
WORST FEARS THAT RTG, WITH BACKING OF USG, IS SCHEMING TO
TOPPLE THEIR FLEDGLING COMMUNIST REPUBLIC. IN SUCH
FASHION RESISTANCE STRUGGLE IS SERVING TO FEED PARANOIA
EXISTING ON BOTH SIDES OF MEKONG RIVER.
WHITEHOUSE

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